

DULUTH AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION

SPECIAL MEETING Monday, April 28, 2008 - 5:00 p.m. Room 402 City Hall

Draft Meeting Summary

Members Present: Michele Gordon, Dr. Robert Powless, Donna Ennis, Warner Wirta, Tony LaDeaux, Joy Dorscher, Ricky DeFoe, Ron Boshey

Excused Absent: John Day, Beatrice Kitto

Staff present: Karen Olesen, John Judd

Others present: Sherry Sanchez-Tibbetts, Maria Danz, Zoe LeBeau

CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND INTRODUCTIONS:

**Motion to approve the agenda by Powless, seconded by DeFoe.
Motion was approved unanimously.**

Indian Center Project Update and Discussion – Sherry Sanchez-Tibbetts

The American Indian Community Housing Organization's Gimaajii-Mino-Bimaadiziyaan (Gimaajii) project will purchase the old YWCA building and provide 29 units of affordable housing consisting of 0, 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments. This housing will serve low income persons who have been or are at risk of becoming homeless. The lower level of the building will serve as a culturally specific social and service center for Duluth's American Indian Community.

Sanchez-Tibbetts provided an update for the Commission regarding the current status of the project. AICHO and the YWCA are negotiating the purchase of both the historic residential building and Trepanier Hall. In addition to the price of the buildings, there would be a long term lease with the YWCA to continue providing childcare services on site. The term of the lease and monthly rental cost is part of the overall negotiations. Both sides would like to come to an agreement as soon as possible, as the purchase of the property has taken much longer than anticipated. Responding to Gordon, Sanchez-Tibbetts said AICHO hopes to be able to close in June. There are several applications for funding pending with decisions in May. If successful, these sources will significantly fill the remaining "gap" in funding. Defoe pointed out that many in the community are anxiously waiting for the housing to be available. He asked if the \$600,000 in City HIF funds were being counted, and they had been included.

The Commission asked that AICHO keep them informed about progress. They also requested that Sanchez-Tibbetts keep in mind that Commissioners may not understand the importance of some of the issues related to the project, and to make sure this was clear. Sanchez-Tibbetts agreed to be mindful of this for future updates.

Dr. Powless summed up his understanding of the situation that there are two main issues to be addressed. The first is the price of the historic YWCA building and the “deal” for Trepanier Hall, which includes both the purchase price and the leasing of the childcare space. The second issue is to raise the funds needed to assure current funders that the project can be successful, which will allow AICHO to close on the purchase of the property. With that summation, the meeting adjourned.